

a shot, and there wasn't a question asked.

We saw the ravages of polio—the iron lungs, the crippled children, and some who lost their lives—and we did what we should do: we followed our parents' guidance, got the vaccinations. We virtually eliminated polio in America as a result of it.

We have got to do the same thing, when it comes to COVID, for children.

The new COVID vaccine for young children is just the latest proof that President Biden's leadership and efforts are working.

Not one Republican, I might add, not one, could see their way to vote for President Biden's American Rescue Plan. It was that same rescue plan which set up the program across America to administer vaccines.

Where would we be today if we were still struggling to do that?

I want to thank the Biden administration for that leadership. We are starting to see good results, despite the Delta variant. And I think that we can see at least the possibility of putting this pandemic behind us. But I hope more people will get vaccinated so that that will happen sooner rather than later.

Every week—and I have noticed—some of our Republican colleagues, including their leader, come to this floor to propose undercutting commonsense vaccine policies that exist to protect our Nation. These Senators, to my knowledge, have all been vaccinated; yet, when it comes to the mistruths and distortions about vaccinations, they are strangely silent. I think we know why.

Apparently, they think pitting Americans against each other is good politics, but it may be good politics one day and bad public health for a long time. It is corrosive to our public spirit. America is strongest when we are united.

We will no doubt hear our Republican colleagues cheer on the small minority of police and firefighters in cities like New York and Chicago, who continue to refuse to get vaccinated, despite mandates.

Here is a number that we should keep in mind, those of us who say, and I count myself as one, that we respect law enforcement and want them to be strong and safe—last year, five times more law enforcement officers died of COVID than died of gun violence.

Let me repeat that. Last year, five times more policemen died of COVID than died from gun violence.

COVID is the No. 1 killer of law enforcement officers in America today. And so when we talk about being on the side of the police, and you want to save their lives—I sure do. I want them to be safe on the job, but I also want them to be vaccinated so that they don't succumb to the illnesses that follow when they are not.

If you care about police safety—if you really care about police safety, put this pandemic behind us once and for

all and get vaccinated, and speak up when people decide, on FOX TV and others, to peddle this anti-vax quackery that we see too often.

#### THE ECONOMY

Madam President, on a related matter, when I listen to our Republican colleagues' rail on the economy, I am reminded of the old saying, attributed to H.L. Mencken, that: "For every complex problem, there is an answer that is simply easy—and wrong."

Four years ago, Republicans used the Senate's reconciliation rules to pass the Trump tax cuts. They didn't get a single Democratic vote.

Why? Because those tax cuts benefited the wealthiest people in America and the most profitable corporations.

So did it cost us anything? Did we make money on that as a nation?

It cost us \$1.9 trillion over 10 years. That was Republican reconciliation 4 years ago. That is more than President Biden is now proposing for his entire slate of programs to ease the financial squeeze on working families and create millions of good jobs and protect our Nation from the dangers of climate change.

All the wailing and gnashing of teeth we are hearing from Republicans about deficits and debt? Where in the heck were they during the Trump years, when the debt went up 36 percent?

They were all voting for it.

Of course, now that President Biden is onboard, they are really deficit hawks. They have changed overnight. Well, you should have heard them during the Trump years, if they are sincere and honest.

Our Republican colleagues moan on and on about inflation. All Americans are concerned about that. The Senator from Kentucky pointed out the reality.

I filled my truck up with gas over the weekend. It is more expensive.

What is causing all that?

Well, part of it is we have no control over the price. The OPEC nations and others are determining what the price levels will be. And other things are part of it as well, yes.

Heating bills are going to go up this winter. When I talk to the people in the natural gas industry, they talk about the problems that they had. When the economy slumped during the pandemic, the production of natural gas went down, the storage of it went down, the price went up, and that is what we are paying for today.

So the pandemic itself has had an impact on our economy, which we cannot and should not ignore.

The pandemic closed down the global economy and sent demand for many products soaring. Getting back to normal is just going to take some time, and it will take thoughtful action, not political potshots.

To our Republican friends: If you are really concerned about the economic strain on middle-class and working families, you have got an opportunity to prove it this week.

President Biden's Build Back Better agenda is moving forward. A vote to

give 35 million families enhanced child tax credits will help them meet the cost of living and save them hundreds, maybe thousands, of dollars a year.

A vote for good, free, early childhood education for every kid in America will put hundreds, even thousands of dollars more back in the hands of parents.

And unlike the Trump tax cuts, the Build Back Better agenda is paid for. That is right. We pay for it. We are not adding to the deficit, and no one earning less than \$400,000 a year will face higher taxes to pay for the Build Back Better agenda.

And then there is the issue of climate change. I am joining a group that hopes we can go to Glasgow, Scotland, for this climate conference the President is attending today, and we hope that a bipartisan group delegation from the Senate can go at the end of this week, and I am looking forward to that possibility.

We are paying so much money out, almost on a weekly basis, for weather-related disasters. Hurricane Ida, this year, cost us \$100 billion in damage. One storm cost roughly twice as much as we proposed to spend the whole year in reducing the harm of climate change for all America.

We need to work together to create a win for the American people and for our planet, and wouldn't it be nice if it were bipartisan for a change?

#### IMMIGRATION

Madam President, let me say a word about Senator MCCONNELL's comments. I sit here and wonder: What can he say next?

Well, today, he took the cake. Apparently, he was suggesting that we have a plan to give every undocumented person in America—was it a million dollars or a half a million dollars?

It is laughable to hear that kind of suggestion.

Remember when the caravans were bringing thousands and thousands and it didn't happen?

Now, there is some notion by the Senator from Kentucky that Joe Biden has a plan to give every undocumented person a million dollars. I mean, you would say to yourself: Did you keep a straight face when you said that? Apparently, he did. And I will just tell you that the plans I have been supporting would put these people to work in America, paying taxes—paying their fair share of taxes, and that is important if we want to get this economy straight and get the workers we need back on the job.

So I would suggest to the Senator from Kentucky, a million dollars for an undocumented person in America? I think you have gone a little bit beyond the pale with that comment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### CYBER SECURITY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, earlier this month, Senator ERNST and I sent a letter to Secretary Mayorkas asking the Secretary to address the

devastating cyber attacks conducted on our national agricultural sector.

Agriculture is designated as one of the country's 16 critical infrastructure industries but historically has not received robust cyber security support from our government. Attacks from foreign cyber criminals are threatening both the livelihood of our farmers and the security of the food that we eat.

Last month, NEW Cooperative, an Iowa grain co-op, was the target of BlackMatter, a Russian cyber criminal cell. The cyber attack shut down systems that control crop irrigation, livestock feed schedules, and inventory distribution. NEW Cooperative comprises about 40 percent of the grain distribution in our country. The co-op narrowly managed to avert a crash in grain prices without paying a \$5.9 million ransom.

These attacks are not limited to just large distributors. The Russian group BlackByte claimed it attacked Farmers Cooperative Elevator Company, an Iowa grain co-op with just four locations. BlackByte is threatening to release 100 gigabytes of sensitive data, including financial, sales, and accounting information, if a ransom is not paid.

The extent of the damage from the NEW Cooperative and the Farmers Cooperative Elevator Company attacks is not isolated to the grain market. Feed from these co-ops sustain more than 11 million head of livestock.

These attacks affect the supply chain that puts food on the shelves of grocery stores all across our country. As Iowa farmers adopt new technologies to get their crops to market, their exposure grows to similar attacks.

These two ransomware attacks are only the latest in a very long line of cyber attacks on our critical infrastructure this year. In July, a Miami-based software provider was attacked, which resulted in trickle-down effects to thousands of organizations. In June, JBS Foods—that happens to be the world's largest meat processing company—that company was attacked, shutting down nine meat packing plants in the United States. In May, Colonial Pipeline was shut down for 11 days, resulting in buying panics and shortages.

While many cyber attacks originate from Russia, attacks have also come from other countries. Earlier this year, the Biden administration formally blamed China for a massive hack of the Microsoft Exchange email server. The hackers responsible appeared to work directly for China's Ministry of State Security. Estimates range as high as 250,000 victims in that attack.

In July, the Senate Judiciary Committee, where I serve as ranking member, held a hearing at my request looking at how to prevent and respond to ransomware attacks. During this hearing, witnesses testified that the Department of Homeland Security would be identifying and hardening critical points of failure. However, it is clear

that their actions up to now have not deterred criminals from targeting the U.S. agricultural industry.

Now, farmers might be only 2 percent of the U.S. population, but they provide food for the other 98 percent. Their job—the 2 percent of the people in this country—is no small task. Keeping Americans fed is very important.

There is an old quote that goes something like this: "There are only nine meals between mankind and anarchy." The quote is key to understanding the importance of keeping our agricultural supply chain safe and secure.

I want to thank my colleague Senator ERNST for joining me today in calling attention to this ongoing national security concern because agricultural security is national security. It is time that we do more to protect this critical sector of agriculture.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Thank you, Mr. President. I also want to thank my senior Senator from our great State of Iowa for his wonderful contributions to our agriculture sector. This is an extremely important topic that we are bringing to the floor today, the threat of agriculture ransomware.

From grocery stores in Iowa to New York and every State in between, it is no secret that the price of groceries has drastically increased over the course of the past year. Combining that with the ongoing supply chain disaster, it is even more apparent that the last thing we need is a cyber security attack that would shut down any of our agriculture production.

Like many Iowans, I am increasingly concerned about the growing ransomware attacks on our Nation's ag economy. In a 2019 report, researchers from the University of Minnesota outlined the seriousness of the risk of cyber attacks to the American food and agriculture system. The report indicated that American agriculture is extremely vulnerable due to outdated security, poor coordination among businesses, and lack of emphasis on cyber security within the industry.

In June, the world's largest meat processing company, JBS, was attacked by a Russian-based operation. Nine U.S.-based meat packing plants temporarily shut down as a result of that attack, including the JBS pork processing plants in Marshalltown and Ottumwa, IA.

Similarly, NEW Cooperative, an Iowa grain cooperative that controls 40 percent of the grain distribution in our country, was recently targeted with a cyber attack by another Russian cyber crime. They attacked controlled crop irrigation, livestock feed schedules, and inventory distribution, and then they demanded \$5.9 million in ransom.

Another attack hit Farmers Cooperative Elevator Company, based in Arcadia, IA. This was coordinated by an-

other Russian attacker, who threatened to release sensitive data, including financial, sales, and accounting information.

This is a very serious warning sign for our ag industry. It is a problem primed to increase as farmers incorporate more technology into their daily lives. Precision agriculture, for example, has promising potential to fulfill increasing global food supply and demand while also improving our soil and water quality, but it demands heavy reliance on interconnected devices and the internet, creating vulnerability. Attackers can exploit these vulnerabilities to remotely control and disrupt data flow, potentially causing devastating consequences, especially as farmers move their crops and their livestock to market.

These attacks risk the livelihood of farmers and affect the supply chain that puts food on the shelves and on our families' tables all across our country. That is why I believe 21st-century farming needs 21st-century solutions. The security, safety, and resiliency of our food supply chain is integral to the overall security of our Nation.

The ag sector is designated as critical infrastructure, but historically, it has not received robust cyber security support from the government.

Just recently, I joined Senator GRASSLEY in urging Secretary Mayorkas to address these ransomware attacks on agriculture and to leverage the Department's resources to prepare for any future attacks. The Biden administration outlined a new national security memorandum that would include cyber security as it relates to agriculture, but the plan is voluntary and would severely limit its effectiveness. It is why I joined Senators GRASSLEY, STABENOW, and TESTER in an effort to get both the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, who oversees the Food and Drug Administration, permanent representation on the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States.

The legislation also adds new criteria to ensure that proposed transactions are reviewed specifically for their potential impact on American food and agricultural systems. The increasing trend of foreign investment in our food and ag system should be met with careful scrutiny in order to safeguard the security and safety of our food supply and, by extension, our Nation because, after all, food security is national security.

Again, I thank my senior Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY for leading these efforts to protect our agriculture industry, the livelihoods of Iowans, and everyone else who puts food on their table.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Last week, Attorney General Garland said something